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tions and amusements of the common people. Unique among these scenes, we find election activities and boating subjects, showing marked versatility and permeated with the vitality and local color characteristic of the pioneer growth of the new west.

Convinced that George Caleb Bingham was the most successful genre painter of the period, the author has felt justified in adding the paintings of this artist to fill a distinct niche in American art history. Interweaving in an interesting and well-illustrated sequential chain, biographical anecdotes with the story of his professional training, the author has made an interesting contribution to this little-elaborated art epoch. Bingham's place as a sterling pioneer citizen of Missouri and chief delineator of genre of the period seems justified, in the light of the material presented to the reader.

WILLIAM H. VARNUM

Audubon the naturalist. A history of his life and time. By Francis Hobart Herrick, Ph.D., Sc.D., professor of biology, Western Reserve university. In two volumes. (New York and London: D. Appleton and company, 1917. 451, 494 p. \$7.50 net)

Audubon's life coincided with a period of marvelous changes in the face of this continent and in the nation itself, his history was a part of those changes, his achievements were even then recognized and honored in both England and America, and his name is today a household word in our own country. Yet nothing like an adequate record of his career has ever appeared. Mrs. St. John's life of the naturalist (London, 1856) is both superficial and trivial. Buchanan's work (London, 1868) tho said to be based on a manuscript furnished by Mrs. Audubon lacks both interest and balance, besides being so full of errors as to be, in the judgment of the family, "useless to the world and unpleasant to them"; even as rewritten by Mrs. Audubon (New York, 1869) it is not a powerful work. The discovery of lost journals of certain trips gave the naturalist's granddaughter, Maria R. Audubon, the basis for *Audubon and his journals* (New York, 1897) in which the distinguished ornithologist, Elliott Coues, provided extensive scientific notes; but the work, important as it is, lacks unity and breadth of treatment. So the field lay open and inviting to new efforts, and the eager anticipation with which one turns to the new work is fortunately realized on its study.

Mr. Herrick is well known as one of our most thorough and careful students of bird life and consequently is peculiarly well fitted to handle a subject that unquestionably demands good ornithological knowledge for its adequate treatment. He has carried the precise analysis of a trained scientist into his historical excursion with good effect. The

various controversies, which involved Audubon and his contemporaries in such bitter struggles that they divided not only the scientific men of his time but also the academies and even cultured society in this country and England, are treated with scrupulous regard for the facts on both sides and with frank recognition of the slips of his hero not always found in the biographer.

The conspicuous merit of this work lies, however, in the mass of new data Mr. Herrick has assembled and interpreted. Much scattered material on Audubon that had been passed over unused in the earlier works has been gathered with care and utilized with critical judgment in the biography before us. The author also had the fortunate experience of the determined seeker after truth, but to an unusual degree, in disclosing new sources of information. He tells us in his preface that in 1903 in reading Audubon's *Ornithological biography* "it seemed to me most strange that but little should be known of the making of so original and masterful a character." And after fruitless search in England and America he went to France in 1913 in search of personal records of the naturalist's father who as a naval officer played an important part in French history. Good fortune brought to Mr. Herrick's notice a mass of letters and other papers of the Audubon family in possession of a notary of Couëron from which he was able to secure a wealth of evidence on unknown and disputed points in Audubon's early life and to give a vivid picture of home, parents, education, associates, and early environment — the factors that moulded and developed the character which unfolded itself in the struggle against the limitations of life in the American wilderness and in the pursuit of an ideal that seemed chimerical to all save the faithful wife whose work and inspiration during years of strenuous endeavor alone made its achievement possible.

Various dates and places have been given for the birth of Audubon but the account of his granddaughter has been most widely accepted; according to it he was born May 5 "anywhere from 1772 to 1783" in Fontainebleau, a beautiful plantation home of one of Louisiana's well known families, at Mandeville in the parish of St. Tammany. C. S. Arthur and others have pointed out grave difficulties in accepting this account. Mr. Herrick has been able to establish the fact that Jean Audubon, father of the ornithologist, who as captain served in the fleet of Compte de Grasse before Yorktown in 1781, lived from 1783 to 1789 as planter and merchant in Les Cayes, Santo Domingo. There he met a creole, Mlle. Rabin, of French parentage, and to them was born April 26, 1785, a son referred to in early documents as Jean Rabin and baptized as Jean Jacques Fougère six months before his sixteenth birthday.

The bill of the physician who assisted at the birth is reproduced in photographic form and with collateral evidence leaves no doubt of the correctness of Mr. Herrick's statements. "On March 7, 1793, Fougère at the age of 8 and Muguet [a half sister, also born at Les Cayes] at six were legalized by a regular act of adoption in the presence of witnesses at Nantes as the children of Jean and Anne Moynet Audubon." It would be impracticable to follow further here the very interesting story of the early life of John James Audubon as Mr. Herrick vividly describes it in the light of this new evidence.

While this part of the story contains the newest and most startling developments in a historical way, it by no means represents Mr. Herrick's total contribution to an understanding of the naturalist's career. With sympathetic, but none the less critical eye, he follows him through his early efforts to establish himself as a merchant and miller on the Kentucky frontier, his final reverses and abandonment of a business career, his wanderings through the west and south while hunting and painting the birds, his début as a naturalist, and the struggle to achieve against great obstacles the success that he finally won.

Whether describing travels or home life, contact with friend or critic, the desperation of poverty that often threatened him with failure or the admiration of learned societies and men of affairs, Audubon's biographer here holds our interest firm while he also wins our approval by the thoroughness of his presentation and the fairness of his conclusions.

The work is freely and splendidly illustrated. Photographs of original documents, of places and people involved in the narrative, of Audubon's original drawings, including colored plates reduced from his famous originals, and copies of paintings and photographs representing the naturalist himself form an especially attractive feature of the book. The printing is excellent, and the whole aspect of the publication accords with its merit as a historical and scientific study of the life of a great American. Its profusion of documents, letters, and personal data about men and places in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys during the first half of the last century impart to it an added appeal to the student of the history of that region.

Discussing Audubon in 1869 John Burroughs wrote "Take him all in all he is one of the most striking figures in our history while the service he has rendered to ornithology surpasses perhaps the work of any other man who has ever lived." The half century which has passed since that date has only strengthened that estimate and the present volume adds new force to the words that express the general sentiment: "America may well be proud of him."

HENRY B. WARD